

FOUR ANTS (HYM. : FORMICIDAE) NEW TO THE  
BELGIAN FAUNA

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We report here the discovery of three ant species and a form of a common species, new to the Belgian fauna. These records should be of interest to British research workers since the species to which they belong live within or just outside the British Isles.

1. *Myrmica rubra* (Linnaeus, 1758) – microgyne form: In May 1983, we found in a garden at Ellezelles (Hainaut) three colonies of *M. rubra* containing microgynes. These were in a heap of rotting hay added to twice a year. Similar colonies were found again in this garden in 1984 and 1985 both in the rotting hay and under stones. During these three years the ratio of microgynes to normal queens increased from 8.8% to 42.9%, then 76.7%.

On a previous occasion, but not in subsequent years, we also obtained a few microgynes and abnormal workers in one nest out of 50 collected from meadows at Merchtem (Brabant) in 1976.

This microgyne form has been reported sporadically from Britain and Europe by several authors from Forel (1874) onwards and has been studied in Dorset, England, where it occurs regularly, by Elmes (1973) and by Pearson (1981). It seems to us to be a mutative form which could be in process of evolving into a distinct parasite species, a hypothesis proposed and discussed by Cammaerts et al. 1987.

2. *Myrmica specioides* Bondroit, 1918 (= *puerilis* Staerke, 1942) : Although this species has been recorded from sandy areas in the Netherlands and South-east England, it was not found in Belgium until, after fruitless searches in Kempen and on old acid dunes on the North Sea coast, we discovered two nests on recent calcareous sand dunes on the coast at Koksijde in 1983. (There is an unpublished record of this species taken by J. C. Felton at Westende sand dunes, Belgium 13.viii.1965).

3. *Tetramorium impurum* (Foerster, 1850) : This species, common in open field and non-sandy soils in Belgium, was for long confused with and identified as the very similar *T. caespitum* (L.). It has been reported from Belgium so far only in recent non-faunistic papers and by Cammaerts et al., 1985. This last paper gives information on the identification and the distribution of the two previously confused species.

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4. *Lasius emarginatus* (Olivier, 1791) : This was formerly recorded from four localities in Mid-Belgium by Lameere (1892) and cited as "assez frequent" by Bondroit (1909). Subsequently Bondroit (1918) retracted these records and wrote "Je ne l'ai jamais vue en Belgique" and no specimens have been found in collections.

We found a colony of this easily recognised species at Fontenoille in the southern part of Belgium- Lorraine 2.ix.1983 but at only one site out of 37 searched.

This species was recorded by Wasmann (1909), in neighbouring and climatically similar Luxembourg. The northern boundary of *L. emarginatus* as at present known runs from the Channel Islands, Normandy, Lorraine, Alsace, South Germany and South Poland (Bernard, 1968).

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